

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 069289
ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SS-15
SAB-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02
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-----034411 172229Z /61
O 172126Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 069289

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PBOR/PN

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE

Q: HOW CAN YOU RECONCILE THE DECONCINI "CONDITION"
WITH THE PANAMA NEUTRALITY TREATY?

A: THE "CONDITION", WHICH IS DESIGNED TO ENSURE
THAT THE CANAL REMAINS OPEN, IS FULLY CONSISTENT
WITH THE SPIRIT AND PURPOSES OF THE NEUTRALITY
TREATY. UNDER ARTICLE IV OF THAT TREATY, AS AMENDED
IN THE SENATE, EACH PARTY HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO
ASSURE THAT THE CANAL WILL REMAIN SECURE AND ACCESSIBLE
TO SHIPS OF ALL NATIONS, AND EACH IS PLEDGED, IN
ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES, TO DE-
FEND THE CANAL AGAINST ANY AGGRESSION OR THREAT DIRECTED
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AGAINST THE CANAL.

THIS OPEN CANAL CONDITION REAFFIRMS THAT EACH PARTY
SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS
FOR THIS PURPOSE. AS PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATOR ROMULO
ESCOBAR BETHANCOURT INDICATED YESTERDAY, THE "CONDI-
TION" RECOGNIZES THAT EACH PARTY HAS THE RIGHT OF

INDEPENDENT ACTION TO KEEP THE CANAL OPEN AND THAT
THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE WOULD IN APPROPRIATE

CIRCUMSTANCES PROVIDE ONE OPTION FOR SAFEGUARDING
THE CANAL.

AS PRESIDENT CARTER STATED LAST NIGHT, THE SENATE'S
ACTION HAS STRENGTHENED THE PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES
OF THE NEUTRALITY TREATY. THE PRESIDENT HAS REAFFIRM-
ED THAT THE SENATE'S ACTION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THERE
IS A RIGHT OF INTERVENTION, OR THAT WE WANT THE RIGHT
TO INTERFERE IN PANAMA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THIS POINT,
TOO, IS EXPLICITLY MADE IN THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO
ARTICLE IV OF THE NEUTRALITY TREATY. (END GUIDANCE).

THIS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR DELIVERY FOR TODAY'S STATE
DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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